



177TH FIGHTER WING JERSEY DEVILS



SAFETY AND HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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AVOIDING DESK RAGE

You've heard of "road rage" and "air rage," but what about "desk rage"? It seems that today's non-stop workplace is leading some office drones to lash out at colleagues and engage in self-destructive behaviors such as smoking and alcohol abuse. Learn to manage office stress before it gets out of control...

From downsizing and economic insecurity, to non-stop communications technologies such as email and cell phones, today's workplace is filled with opportunities to take on too much responsibility and become mired in stress. Many workers today feel trapped and driven to work long hours, skip vacations and keep quiet about heavy workloads to show their commitment.

Workers who do so without proper stress management techniques can find themselves erupting into shouting matches and fist fights with their colleagues, having difficulties at home or engaging in self-destructive behaviors such as drug abuse or alcoholism. Signs of too much stress include increased irritability and anxiety, frequent illness-related work absences, decreased morale and sleep and eating pattern changes.

Social isolation is also a big problem for stressed-out workers. Unfortunately, unhappy, angry employees drive their co-workers away, leaving them alone with their troubles.

If you feel that your stress may be getting out of control, try the following:

Remember the big picture. There's more to life than work. Your job shouldn't overshadow family life, hobbies or other pleasures that replenish your energy and sense of self-worth. Keep a photo of your loved ones on your desk to help you keep things in perspective.

Make time for a social life. Human contact is one of the most important ways you can relieve stress. Work hard to maintain positive relationships with family members, friends and co-workers.

Take a break! If you find yourself consistently glued to your computer screen late into the evening, try setting a daily hour limit and go home early. Get away from your desk at lunch and break times, and don't forget vacations. To do your best work, you need time to replenish your energy and creativity.

Take care of your body. Exercise, eat healthy, drink plenty of water and get enough sleep. Physical activity reduces mental stress, while sleep deprivation, hunger and dehydration drain you physically, increase irritability and impair your concentration.

Don't be afraid to talk to your supervisor. He or she is in the best position to understand your workload, offer guidance and help set priorities. Also, ask for feedback. You might find that you have been holding yourself to unnecessarily high and unattainable standards.

Take advantage of counseling services such as stress-relief programs and yoga and exercise classes.

Finally, if you find that these suggestions don't help, and you continue to feel unhappy and drained, seek professional help. A counselor may be able to help you gain control and get your life back.

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If you have any safety related topics you would like to see in our publication or have any questions that we can help with, please contact the Wing Safety Office at 6013 or e-mail at Robert.Fusco@njatla.af.mil

Winter Preparedness Safety Tips

Timely preparation, including structural and non-structural mitigation measures to avoid the impacts of severe winter weather, can avert heavy personal, business and government expenditures. Experts agree that the following measures can be effective in dealing with the challenges of severe winter weather:

BEFORE SEVERE WEATHER ARRIVES

- ✓ **Store** drinking water, first aid kit, canned/no-cook food, non-electric can opener, radio, flashlight and extra batteries where you can get them easily, even in the dark.
- ✓ **Keep** cars and other vehicles fueled and in good repair, with a winter emergency kit in each.
- ✓ **Get** a NOAA Weather Radio to monitor severe weather.
- ✓ **Know** how the public is warned (siren, radio, TV, etc.) and the warning terms for each kind of disaster in your community; e.g.:
 - ⇒ **"winter storm watch"**... Be alert, a storm is likely
 - ⇒ **"winter storm warning"**... Take action, the storm is in or entering the area
 - ⇒ **"blizzard warning"**... Snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill, seek refuge immediately!
 - ⇒ **"winter weather advisory"**... Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists
 - ⇒ **"frost/freeze warning"**... Below freezing temperatures are expected and may cause damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees
 - ⇒ **"flash flood or flood watch"**... Be alert to signs of flash flooding. Be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice
 - ⇒ **"flash flood warning"**... A flash flood is imminent, act quickly to save yourself....you may have only seconds
 - ⇒ **"flood warning"**... Flooding has been reported or is imminent, take necessary precautions at once
- ✓ Know safe routes from home, work and school to high ground.
- ✓ Know how to contact other household members through a common out-of-state contact in the event you and have to evacuate and become separated.
- ✓ Know how to turn off gas, electric power and water before evacuating.
- ✓ Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.
- ✓ Keep plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber, sandbags and hand tools on hand and accessible.
- ✓ Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Install storm shutters, doors and windows; clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks; and check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow—or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.

DURING A WINTER STORM

- ✓ Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your house cooler than normal. Temporarily shut off heat to less-used rooms.
- ✓ If using kerosene heaters, maintain ventilation to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Keep heaters at least three feet from flammable objects. Refuel kerosene heaters outside.
- ✓ Avoid travel if possible. If you must travel, do so during daylight. Don't travel alone. Stay on main roads, and keep others informed of your schedule.

AFTER THE STORM

- ✓ Report downed power lines and broken gas lines immediately.
- ✓ After blizzards, heavy snows or extreme cold, check to see that no physical damage has occurred and that water pipes are functioning. If there are no other problems, wait for streets and roads to be opened before you attempt to drive anywhere.
- ✓ Check on neighbors, especially any who might need help.
- ✓ Beware of overexertion and exhaustion. Shoveling snow in extreme cold causes many heart attacks. Set your priorities and pace yourself after any disaster that leaves you with a mess to clean up. The natural tendency is to do too much too soon

CPSC, Lawn-Boy Inc. Announce Recall of Power Mowers



WASHINGTON, D.C. - In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Lawn-Boy Inc., of Bloomington, Minn., is recalling about 90,000 Lawn-Boy power mowers. Stress cracks can develop in the mower's fuel tank, allowing gasoline to leak and posing a risk of fire and burn

injuries.

Lawn-Boy received nearly 400 reports of fuel tanks on these mowers leaking, and one report of a fire. No injuries or property damage were reported.

The recalled Lawn-Boy SilverPro and GoldPro Series are walk-behind, 21-inch mowers powered by 2-cycle Duraforce engines. "Duraforce" is written on the top of the recoil starter. A decal on the right rear of the mower's housing has one of the following model numbers: 10247, 10252, 10323, 10324, 10424, 10550 or 10552. The decal also has a serial number starting with "21."

Lawn-Boy dealers, and department and home center stores sold these mowers from December 2000 through November 2001 for between \$300 and \$600.

Consumers should stop using these recalled mowers immediately and contact Lawn-Boy to arrange for a free replacement fuel tank to be installed. To locate the nearest Lawn-Boy service dealer or for more information, consumers should call Lawn-Boy at (800) 444-8676 anytime, or go to the firm's web site at www.lawnboy.com.

For more information on the current or any past recalls visit CPSC's homepage at <http://www.cpsc.gov/>

CPSC and BRIO® Corp. Announce Recall of Curious George Toys

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), BRIO® Corp., of Germantown, Wis., a subsidiary of BRIO AB of Sweden, is voluntarily recalling about 3,100 Curious George toys. The toys include fabric-filled mobile phones that can pose a choking hazard to young children.

CPSC and BRIO Corp. have not received any reports of injuries or incidents. This recall is being conducted to prevent the possibility of injuries.



These Curious George monkey plush toys are dressed in a yellow plastic space suit with matching gloves. They have a detachable backpack with a red fabric-filled mobile phone attached. The small mobile phone is 1.25-inches by 1.5-inches, and is connected to a gray, mesh backpack by a 4.75-inch string sewn into one of the backpack's seams. A label in the collar of the space suit reads, "Curious George by BRIO." This is an "Activity George," which is written on the packaging, and is labeled for children ages 18 months and older. The back of the box reads: "Removable backpack with mobile phone!" The recalled toy has model number 32900 written on the front of the box.

Specialty toy stores, Internet retailers, and mail order catalogs sold the recalled Curious George toys nationwide from July 2001 through November 2001 for about \$25.

Consumers should take these toys away from children immediately and call BRIO to get a refund or replacement toy. For more information, contact BRIO toll-free at (888) 274-6869 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. CT Monday through Friday, or go to the firm's web site at www.briotoy.com. Consumers also can send the toy to BRIO Corp., SAFETY RECALL, N120 W18485 Freistadt Road, Germantown, WI 53022.

HAZARD
ALERT

ERGONOMICS AND YOUR EYES

When we talk about ergonomics, we almost always talk about the back problems, carpal tunnel problems in our wrist and tight muscles in our neck. There is another part of our body, our eyes, which we really need to start taking better care of at work.

“Computer vision syndrome” is a term used by many doctors to describe computer related eye problems. These ailments include a cluster of symptoms such as blurred vision, irritated eyes, headaches, dry eyes and eye-strain.

Most office workers spend up to 6 to 8 hours a day staring at a computer screen which can really affect their vision. The fuzzy letters, the illuminated background, the glare from lighting across the screen can cause many eye problems.

There are some preventive measures we can take to help reduce the effects of computer vision syndrome to our eyes.

- ⇒ Buy glasses for computer use. If you are finding yourself squinting while doing computer work, you may need a stronger prescription. If you wear bifocals and find yourself lifting your head to read the computer you might want to get a separate pair of glasses with stronger prescription just for computer use. You can also increase font size when typing to reduce eyestrain.
- ⇒ Glare can be a problem. Depending on where your VDT screen is on your desk glare can be a problem. Overhead lighting and sunlight coming in from a window will affect the amount of glare on the screen. Use black type when typing and stay away from fancy screen savers to reduce the problem. Use a glare screen to help reduce glare.
- ⇒ Position your monitor. Your monitor should be directly in front of your keyboard tray with the top of the monitor screen at eye level while you are sitting up straight. This is important for people who wear bifocals, since they tend to raise their chins to see through the lower half of the glasses. Remember your monitor should not be closer than 12” away or further than 36” away.
- ⇒ Take mini-breaks. At least once an hour look away from your work and refocus on something further away. Take a walk away from your computer and look out the window to a point a distance away. Close your eyes for a couple of seconds to rest them. Blink your eyes to re-moisten them.



With today's increasingly visual forms of communication and entertainment, these precautions are more important than ever at work and at home.